

ART. VI.—*Proceedings of the Asiatic Society.*

*Wednesday Evening, the 6th February, 1839.*

The Honorable Sir E. RYAN, President, in the chair.

The Proceedings of the last Meeting were read and confirmed.

MESSRS A. PORTEOUS and J. COWIE, proposed at the last Meeting, were balloted for, and duly elected Members of the Society.

Mr. WM. JAMESON proposed by the President, seconded by Mr. H. T. PRINSEP.

The Honorable Sir H. SETON proposed by the President, seconded by the LORD BISHOP of Calcutta.

The Rev. JOHN HENRY PRATT, of Caius College, Cambridge, M. A. proposed by the President, seconded by the LORD BISHOP of Calcutta.

Mr. EDW. THOMAS proposed by Capt. FORBES, seconded by Dr. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Mr. J. W. LAIDLAY proposed by Mr. W. STORM, seconded by Dr. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

Mr. A. C. DUNLOP proposed by Mr. HARE, seconded by Dr. GOODEVE.

Read a letter from C. G. MANSELL, Esq. stating that in consequence of his proceeding to England for a sort time he was obliged to withdraw from the Society, which he hoped to rejoin on his return to India.

Read the following letter from Government sanctioning the purchase of 100 copies of the Latin and Anamitan part of the Cochin-Chinese Dictionary, prepared by the Right Rev. the BISHOP of Isaurapolis, for 1000 rupees, in addition to the payments already made for the first part of the work in question.

‘ No. 16.

‘ To W. B. O'SHAUGHNESSY, Esq. M. D. *Officiating Secretary Asiatic Society.*

‘ *Genl. Dept.*

SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter, dated the 22d ultimo, and in reply to state, that his Honor in Council has heretofore refused to incur the expense of 2000 rupees towards executing the revised Latin Anamitan Dictionary, nevertheless rather than the 100 copies subscribed for by Government should be mutilated, and imperfect, his Honor the President in Council consents to add 1000 rupees to the payments already made by Government, under the condition of obtaining 100 complete sets of the work, besides the separate vocabularies.

‘ I have the honor to be, Sir,

‘ Your most obedient servant,

‘ *Council Chamber, the 2d Jan. 1839.*’

‘ H. T. PRINSEP,

‘ *Secy. to the Govt. of India.*’

*Library.*

The following books were presented :

Transactions of the Society of Arts, &c. vol. 51, part 2nd—*by the Society.*

Rapport sur les Poissons Fossiles decouverts en Angleterre par L. Agassiz, Neuchatel, 1835—*by the Author.*

Actes de la Societe Helvetique des Sciences Naturelles—*by the Society.*

Map of the Eastern Frontier of British India, with the adjacent countries extending to Yunan in China, by Capt. R. B. PEMBERTON—*by the Government of India.*

The following books were received from the booksellers :

Georgii Wilhelmi Freytagii Lexicon Arabico-Latinum, Tome 4th.

Lardner's Cabinet Cyclopædia—Literary Men of France, vol. 1st.

*Museum.*

King and Queen of White Ants, presented by W. STORM, Esq.

*Physical.*

The Secretary read the following correspondence which took place with Government regarding Major Hay's collection of Natural History Specimens.

*Copy of the letter addressed to Government, pursuant to the recommendation of the Committee of Papers.*

To H. T. PRINSEP, Esq.

*Secretary to the Government of India, General Department.*

'SIR,

I am directed by the Asiatic Society to request that you will submit to his Honor the President the accompanying copies, 1st, of a letter from Major Hay, relative to his Museum of objects of Natural History; 2d, of a report by a Special Committee of the Asiatic Society appointed to examine that collection.

In submitting these documents to the notice of his Honor in Council, the Asiatic Society direct me to add a statement of their views on the several subjects referred to by Major Hay and the Sub-Committee.

In the opinion of the Asiatic Society, the collection imported by Major Hay is of the highest value, in a scientific point of view. It not only affords to the naturalists of India standard specimens for reference in pursuit of their numerous researches, but it possesses the still greater value of being available for the introduction of the systematic study of Natural History among the Natives of Bengal, a study impracticable without the aid of such a collection, and indispensable as a preliminary measure to the full investigation of the Zoology and Natural History of our Indian possessions.

The duplicates contained in Major Hay's collection would, moreover, serve the twofold end of completing the Museum of the Court of Directors in London, and of procuring for India exchanges of valuable objects neither comprised in Major Hay's collection, nor indigenous in this country.

The Society while thus fully aware of the valuable opportunity now afforded for the promotion of the study of Natural History in India, are not insensible to the difficulties which oppose themselves to the procural of Major Hay's Museum. The estimate of its pecuniary value, submitted by the proprietor, far exceeds the resources of the Society, or any subscriptions which might be collected among individuals anxious to promote the object in view.

It seems possible still that were the Government to extend its patronage and pecuniary aid to the Museum, that the current efforts of the Society and of individual subscribers might lead to the accomplishment of some arrangement which would secure the acquisition of this Museum for Bengal.

In the event of such measures being adopted, the Society will gladly apply their establishment to the custody of the Museum, and they pledge themselves at all times to facilitate the application thereof to the furtherance of the chief end of its acquisition, namely, the instruction of the Natives of Bengal in the several subjects, such collections are capable of illustrating. For this purpose the Museum might be held available for the illustration of lectures in Natural History, delivered at any Government Institution in Calcutta, such precautions being taken as would secure it from injury or loss.

I am directed finally to refer to your letter of the 26th July, 1838, in which you state "that the Governor General of India in Council will be ready to receive from the Society recommendations for the purchase or other procurement of objects of more than common interest, of which the Society may receive information, and for the obtainment of which it may want the necessary funds."

The Society most respectfully represent the present occasion as one eminently deserving of the patronage of the Government, in the spirit of the views expressed in the preceding extract.

I have, &c.

'7th Jan. 1838.'

W. B. O'SHAUGHNESSY.

' To the Secretary of the Asiatic Society, &c. &c. Calcutta.

' SIR,

Agra, December 2nd, 1838.

' I beg to forward for the consideration of the President and members of the Asiatic Society some papers connected with a collection of natural curiosities lately accumulated by myself on a visit to the Cape of Good Hope, and Islands in the Eastern Archipelago.

' In the first instance, I will briefly state my views in forming it; and afterwards proceed, as far as I am able, to give details. Until the publication of Swainson's volumes on the Classification of Animals, and afterwards of the Quadrupeds and Birds, I never prosecuted the science with that ardour which these books enticed me to. His distinctions, however, appearing so beautifully clear, it occurred to me that a Museum classified from these books, upon one uniform principle, could not fail to prove interesting; and that such was much wanting in Calcutta, I had not a doubt. I was then at the Cape of Good Hope for the benefit of my health, and having much leisure time, I took the thing in hand. My first care was to get the specimens in the vicinity of the Cape, selecting chiefly those in illustration of *genera*. I then became acquainted with that unexceptionable, *practical* naturalist and taxidermist, Monsieur Verreaux, who had been extolled for his art by his master Cuvier; had been the personal friend of Levaillant; the intimate associate of Ruppell and Lesson; and well known to several other naturalists of note. In such a person how could I fail to be interested? Through this individual I procured the only duplicate skins existing of the large collection formed by that zealous naturalist, Dr. A. Smith, who had just returned from the scientific expedition into the interior of Africa, and whose work of African Zoology is only now in course of publication. My original purchase was limited to one hundred pounds, adding for this sum only twenty genera, and a few new species. Finding however my little stock, by the addition of new discoveries, increase in interest, I determined to endeavour to procure from South America those gorgeous specimens for which that country is so celebrated, to add to the beauty of the whole. With this view I made a list of the most interesting genera, and wrote to Rio Janeiro, where I knew Dr. Natterer, the German naturalist, had been collecting for the Emperor of Austria. From that country I procured many rare and interesting birds, and a vast collection of insects. Monsieur Verreaux hearing of the illness of his father in Paris, determined upon a hasty return to his own country, and wishing to go immediately, unincumbered, offered me the whole of his remaining specimens then at the Cape, mounted and in skin. I had now become the purchaser of animals, birds, &c. to the amount of fifteen hundred pounds. The remainder of my purchases at the Cape from different naturalists being about five hundred more. I shortly determined upon leaving the Cape and proceeding to Java, with the intention of returning to India via the Eastern Archipelago, for the purpose of adding largely to (what I shall now denominate) the *Museum*. On this tour I was obliged to content myself with skins, obtaining large numbers, and curing them myself. From the Buggeese I was fortunate enough to procure some rare and interesting specimens from the Moluccas and Borneo: in fact I left no part of the Eastern Archipelago untouched, and have now brought to Calcutta the whole of my labours.

' Here, however, my difficulties commence. Upon my arrival I find my circumstances changed, and that independent of the whole of my private means expended in the forming this Museum, when my accounts are closed, I shall have a balance against me of about twenty thousand rupees, to meet which I supposed I had resources, but sundry misfortunes have left me none.

' My return to Calcutta had been so arranged that I should have had three months remaining of unexpired leave to devote to the arrangement of all I had gathered together; instead of which I found myself hampered by the most unforeseen difficulties, with no immediate funds to defray the expenses. Obligated to hurry to the Upper Pro-



vinces to join my regiment, forming a portion of the army of the Indus, it now became a serious consideration what was to become of all I had with so much labour and anxiety amassed together.

‘ With only ten days to remain in Calcutta, honor pointed out to me but one course, which was to expose the whole for inspection, and eventual sale in satisfaction of my creditors. This I have done, and the greater portion is now to be seen at the rooms of Moore, Hickey, and Co. Up to the time of my leaving, I had however found it impossible to unpack, and expose for view in a secure place, the valuable portion of skins; but, although I have no list of the whole, I beg to forward a list of those now exposed for sale, the remainder are in various boxes in the godowns of Moore, Hickey, and Co. and at my own agent’s, John Lowe and Co.

‘ My great desire is, that if this Museum is sold, it should be disposed of to some Public Society, or to any number of persons who would allow it to remain as a Museum for public reference.

‘ I have estimated the expense of the whole at thirty thousand rupees: but my sole wish is to realise a suffice to pay my debt, and with this view I offer it to the Asiatic Society.

‘ My original intention was to have exhibited it, and have demanded one rupee for the entrance of each person to defray its expenses, after which I should have handed it over to one of the Public Societies gratis.

‘ From the published proceedings of your Society, I glean that you are not in the habit of expending large sums of money on specimens, but nevertheless you might probably do me the honor at an early meeting of your Society to bring the matter forward; and a discussion on your part might bring it to the notice of Government, or it might assist me in disposing of what may be on my return from Cabul a mere wreck, from want of a little care.

‘ I beg also to notice, that just one year ago I despatched from Cape Town into the Namaqua country an intelligent man, furnished with a waggon and oxen, and every necessary for the purpose of collecting. Up to the latest accounts he had not returned. The expense incurred in fitting out the expedition amounted to nearly four hundred pounds, and upon his return I am entitled, without paying any thing more, to the half of every thing, which I will add free of expense to any Society or parties who may purchase the whole Museum; and as the man deputed was formerly with Captain Alexander on his travels, and at the same time an experienced person in preparing skins, &c. it is probable that he will return with many of great interest and value.

‘ I shall now proceed to forward catalogues of the specimens in Calcutta, forming the Museum.

‘ I have the honor to be, Sir,

‘ Your most obedient servant,

‘ WILLIAM E. HAY.’

‘ P.S. I have succeeded in getting lists of the mounted specimens printed, but not of the skins, which must be forwarded hereafter. I have added one sheet of the skins, but time will not admit of more.’

*Report of a Special Committee of the Asiatic Society on the Zoological Collection recently introduced to India by Major W. E. HAY.*

‘ In estimating the value of this collection, your Committee beg to state that they must be guided by different considerations from those by which they would be influenced were the objects comprising it indigenous to India.

‘ The collection has been made in Africa, South America, and the Straits composing the Molucca islands; many of the objects it contains are the result of Dr. A. Smith’s mission to the interior of South Africa, other parts of it were collected under the direction of M. Verreaux, and the rest by Major Hay himself, aided by M. Verreaux in

determining most of the species; so that the collection comprises many of the most remarkable forms from quarters of the world from which the Society have hitherto received no contributions, and with which persons residing in India could only become acquainted through the medium of books.

‘The value of a collection that places it in our power here, to become acquainted with several hundred animals which otherwise we should only know by their published descriptions, must obviously be great; for so long as this country remains without such collections in every department of Natural History, so long must we be deficient in one of the first requisites for advancement in the higher branches of natural science.

‘Major Hay’s collection has yet another peculiar recommendation to us in this country, which elsewhere, perhaps, would be of less importance; namely, that most of its contents have been identified by Dr. Smith and M. Verreaux, so that the species it contains would be so many land-marks to which we could safely refer in the classification of the animals of this country—an object which still in a great measure remains to be accomplished.

‘Such being our views of the importance of Major Hay’s Zoological Collection, we are of opinion that the pecuniary estimate of its value, referred to in Major Hay’s letter to the Society, is not over-rated; but we regret that in the present condition of the Society in regard to disposable funds, we cannot recommend so great an outlay.

‘As, however, the safety of this valuable collection is an object worthy of our solicitude, we beg to recommend that the rooms of the Society be offered for its reception, that it might be at once safely and economically exhibited on the part of Major Hay, or those into whose hands it may have fallen.

‘Were such an offer to be accepted, instead of being exposed to injury in a public sale room, without the necessary attention from persons accustomed to such a charge, the collection might be much augmented in value by the exchange of duplicates with the Society. In recommending this course, we are guided equally by all interests concerned, for while we form the very highest estimate of the value of the collection, in a scientific point of view, we cannot but regret to think that if it were put up for sale, it would barely realise the expenses which have been perhaps already incurred by its exhibition.

‘D. M. LEOD,  
‘W. CRACROFT,  
‘J. M. CLELLAND,  
‘GEO. EVANS.’

No. 72.

*The Officiating Secretary to the Asiatic Society.*

‘*Genl. Dept.*

‘SIR,—I am directed to acknowledge the receipt of your letter dated the 7th instant, forwarding copies of a letter from Major Hay, relative to his Museum of objects of Natural History, and of a report by a Special Committee of the Asiatic Society, appointed to examine that collection.

‘2nd. In reply, I am directed to state, that the President in Council cannot regard a collection of prepared Birds, and other animals, as falling within the class of objects which the Government of India expressed its readiness to receive from the Society recommendations to purchase, or otherwise procure. Such preparations have always appeared to Government to be too perishable to be made objects of collection in a climate like that of Bengal, and fall within the exception referred to in the last paragraph of my letter, dated the 26th July, 1837. His Honor in Council cannot therefore entertain the proposition that the Government should purchase Major Hay’s extensive collection of objects of Natural History, but would suggest that the specimens are better adapted for the Museums of Europe, where the climate is less destructive.

‘I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

‘H. T. PRINSEP,

‘*Council Chamber, the 6th Jan. 1839.*’

‘*Secy. to the Govt. of India.*’

Read a letter from Dr. LORD, dated Peshawar, 4th November 1838, forwarding two boxes of specimens of Natural History, collected by him while he was attached to Capt. BURNES's mission.

Read a letter from J. G. MALCOLMSON, Esq. regarding M. AGASSIZ' opinions on the erratic blocks of the Jura, &c. &c.

Read a letter from Mr. PRICHARD to Mr. J. W. GRANT, on the microscopic examination of lignite from Sandway.

Notes on the dissection of the *Arctonix Collaris*, by Dr. GEO. EVANS.

A paper on Artificial Hatching in Egypt, by M. DEMAS.

Notes on a new genus of the *Fissirostres*, *Todidæ*, Vigors, by Mr. B. H. HODGSON.

On the conclusion of the business, the Officiating Secretary read the following report from Col. D. M'LEOD, Chief Engineer, on the best and most economical mode of extending the accommodation of the Society's House, with the view of having carried into effect any additions and improvements that may be determined on, simultaneously with the general repairs of the building, now become absolutely necessary for its preservation.

Col. D. M'LEOD, also forwarded two plans, No. 1 and 2, with his report, and an estimate from MESSRS. SHERRIFF and Co., the builders, amounting to rupees 10,664-15.

*To the Officiating Secretary to the Asiatic Society.*

'SIR,—In compliance with the desire expressed at the last meeting of the Society, that I would examine and report on the best and most economical means of extending the accommodation of the Society's House, with the view of having carried into effect any additions and improvements that may be determined on, simultaneously with the general repairs of the building, now become absolutely necessary for its preservation, I beg leave to state to you, for communication to the next meeting of our Society, that I have repeatedly, and carefully examined the building in communication with Mr. ROWE, the builder, and with reference to the extent of additional accommodation which I am led to understand will soon be found desirable, if not indispensable, for the Society's rapidly increasing collections in all departments. I have the honor to report my opinion as follows:

'2nd. In addition to the ordinary repairs of cleaning up the interior and exterior of the building, and painting, it has been ascertained that the decayed state of the staircase roof is such as to demand its immediate removal, and renewal; and it is, I believe, generally agreed that a skylight in that apartment, or in the passage between it and the Hall is indispensable, as the effect of the valuable collection of pictures placed there is quite lost, from the absence of a proper or sufficient light. The roof of the staircase, however, being about three feet higher than that of the passage, the light from the former would in a great measure be intercepted by the architrave over the colonnade, and would consequently be so far defective. I would therefore recommend its being placed on the roof of the passage, in its centre, on a design (a drawing of which accompanies) now of general adoption in the Department of Public Works, and which I have always found to answer the purpose extremely well, and to continue water proof. The cost of such a skylight, measuring eight feet by six feet, as appears by Mr. ROWE's estimate, will only amount to Rs. 150.

'3rd. It was also I believe admitted, that a small staircase leading to the roof, such as is appended to almost every dwelling house here, is much needed, in lieu of the very inconvenient ladder, with trap door, now existing for that purpose; this deficiency I propose to supply in connection with the extension of the building, which I have now to suggest.

'4th. Two different modes of effecting this object have occurred to me, in both of which, however, is included the erection of a large room, in two floors of thirty-six feet by twenty-four feet, on either side of the staircase room to the east and west.

'5th. The first, as represented in both floors of plan No. 1, would leave the present



staircase (which is in substantial condition) precisely as it now stands, and the proposed new side rooms free and entire, with the exception of having the northern part of one side cut off for the purpose of adding a small back stairs, and a retiring closet attached thereto. The cost of this arrangement, including the sky light, exclusive of the removal of the decayed roof, and of other repairs, is shewn in Mr. ROWE's estimate No. 1, to be rupees 8485-10, and if interior new doors are not judged requisite to the new rooms in the upper floor, this estimate will be reduced to rupees 7861-10, as there exist old ones which may be applied to the lower floor.

'6th. The second, as represented in plan No. 2, would remove entirely the present double staircase, and introduce it as a handsome single one into the curtailed new side room. The very thick walls now existing in the basement on each side of the flight of stairs, as well as the colonnades over them, would in this case become quite unnecessary, and ought to be removed, so as to leave the whole of that apartment from wall to wall, in the line of east and west, free, and uninterrupted both above and below. The extra accommodation thus to be obtained, would be about equal with that of the first proposal, and the effect produced on the general appearance of the rooms, on entering from the new staircase, would certainly be more grand and imposing; but on proceeding to arrange all matters necessarily involved in carrying this measure into effect, I find, that as shewn in Mr. ROWE's estimate No. 2, it is unavoidably more expensive than the first by rupees 3178-3-6, and as the advantage is only in appearance, I fear it must, as matter of course, be rejected in favor of plan No. 1.

'7th. Should the latter also be found too expensive to be met by the available funds of the Society, the only alteration I have at present to propose, is to reduce the size of the new side rooms, so as that the walls shall be in a line with the other walls of the house—leaving them I believe about 26 × 18 feet, which would of course diminish the charge considerably. But the Plan No. 1, if practicable, I would recommend, as it would be the means, I think, of preventing all future patching of the building—it provides at once two rooms of 36 × 24 feet and two rooms of 26 × 24 feet, with a suitable back stairs and closet in two floors, while it cannot be said to affect injuriously the light or the ventilation of the present apartments.

'8th. I would further beg leave to bring to the notice of the Meeting, that the dampness of the lower, or basement, floor is greatly complained of as a serious evil. I observe that this defect cannot conveniently be remedied by raising and new fluing, besides which that process would be attended with a heavy expenditure. I would therefore recommend that an expedient now successfully adopted, of laying the floor in a composition of tar and sand, (a specimen of which may be seen in the Society's House, executed I understand about two years ago by Mr. Rowe,) be resorted to in the lower apartments, to correct this evil. Its cost, as shewn, in Mr. ROWE's estimate No. 3 will be Rs. 1007.

'9th. It only remains to show in abstract the total expense in which the Society will be involved by the adoption of plan No. 1, for extending the accommodation, in addition to the requisite general repairs. The following is the abstract:

For the ordinary repairs, as per Mr. ROWE's estimate, ..	Rs.	854	8	0
For the new Roof to the Staircase, .. .. .	"	771	13	0
For new laying the floor of the Basement, .. .. .	"	1007	0	0
For the proposed Skylight, .. .. .	"	150	0	0
For the proposed 4 additional Rooms and all connected with them, .. .. .	"	7861	10	0

Grand Total of Expenditure, " 10,644 15 0

'10th. In conclusion, I have to observe in reference to Mr. ROWE's estimates, that the rates are very fair and moderate throughout.

'I have the honor to be, Sir,

'Your most obedient servant,

'Fort William, February 6, 1839.'

'D. M'LEOD.'

## No. 2.

Estimate for building two additional Rooms, Back Stairs, and Closet; also removing the Staircase, &c. and fixing a new Staircase in the Western Room, as per Plan No. 2.

Building two Rooms, &c. as particularized in

Estimate No. 1. .. .. . 8485 10 0

Alterations in the Staircase Room, 1 wall,

$53\frac{1}{2} \times 3 \times 18\frac{1}{2}$  .. .. . 2969 $\frac{1}{4}$

One Architrave,  $53\frac{1}{2} \times 2 \times 3$  .. .. . 321

Fixing Beams,  $103\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2}$  .. .. . 232 $\frac{3}{4}$

Ditto ditto 2nd Story,  $103\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 2\frac{1}{2}$  .. .. . 388

Roof and Floor,  $53\frac{1}{2} \times 23 \times 2$  .. .. . 2461

6372 @ 13/8 860 3 6

Balustrade,  $53\frac{1}{2} \times 1\frac{1}{2} \times 3\frac{1}{4}$  .. .. . 300 $\frac{3}{4}$  13/8 40 8 0

8 Pillars, each 20 feet, .. .. . 2/ 320 0 0

Inside Cornice, 153 feet, .. .. . /8 76 8 0

Outside ditto, 54 ditto, .. .. . 1/ 54 0 0

## WOOD WORK.

34 Beams, each 28 feet,  $14 \times 8$  @ 1/8 .. .. . 1428 0 0

60 feet Architrave,....  $18 \times 10$  @ 1/ .. .. . 120 0 0

2500 feet Rafter,.....  $3 \times 2$  @ /6 .. .. . 150 0 0

Principal Staircase, including landing to be fixed in the New Western Room, .. .. . 900 0 0 3949 3 6

Co's. Rs. 12,434 13 6

771 0 4

11,661 13 6

Deduct the renewal of the decayed Roof, ..

N. B. The above includes changing the old roof of Staircase Room.

Resolved,—That the Society approve of Col. M'LEOD's Plan No. 1, and sanction the sum estimated for the construction of four additional rooms, and repairs of the premises, and that the Secretary be requested to communicate the resolution of the meeting to the Builders, with orders to commence the work, with as little delay as possible.